it possible for all the villages in the region to get drinking water at home with some contribution; and

(c) if so, whether Government after analyzing the success would propagate such a plan to other panchayats throughout the country for making available drinking water?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT [DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA]: (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The report is conceptually true in respect of the Olavanna Gram Panchayat in Kerala.

(c) The sector reform projects on pilot basis are being implemented in identified pilot districts in 26 States. These projects envisage to institutionalise the concept of Community participation and demand responsive approach in rural drinking water sector, wherein the rural beneficiaries would plan, sanction, partially fund, implement, manage, operate and maintain the water supply schemes of their choice, themselves.

Empowering Women

1915. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item titled "Empowering women" appearing in the Hindu dated 12th June, 2001;

(b) whether it is a fact that Mahila Gram Pradhan are still influenced by male relatives; and

(c) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to curb this practice and for effective empowerment of women?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. It has been, *inter alia,* reported that a recent Lucknow study has confirmed that mahila pradhans are still ruled by

male relatives and that a number of experts on Panchayati Raj, who attended a one-day seminar at Bakshi-ka-Talab recently said the dependence of mahila gram pradhans on their menfolk eventually forced the government to issue an order forbidding hushands and brothers of women gram pradhans from attending meetings.

However, several studies conducted by research organisations in many other States indicate that a large preponderance of women Gram Pradhans are no longer influenced by male relatives and they have proved to be effective leaders capable of taking independent decisions.

(c) The Central Government, taking note of the fact that it is for the first time that women have been elected to the Panchayats, have advised StatesUTs to take special steps for capacity building of women Members and Chairpersons of Panchayats. The Central Government had also requested State Governments to ensure that meeting of Gram Panchayats are attended only by those who are so elected and by none else (i.e. husband, brother, father or any other category of relative should not be allowed to participate in such meetings) and to issue necessary guidelines to Panchayats at all levels to ensure that women Members of PRIs are not reduced to mere proxies or figureheads.

Computerisation of Land Records

1916. SHRI B. J. PANDA: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a need to computerise land records in the country;

(b) if so, the steps taken in this regard, State-wise;

(c) the budgetary provision made to each State to computerise land records; and

(d) the progress made in this regard, State-wise?